

Cable
Text:

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DE RUEHDO #0356/01 1510922
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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9097
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0361
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0211

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000356

SENSITIVE

FOR AF/SPG AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [INRB](#) [SU](#) [RS](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: DOHA DARFUR TALKS SITREP FOUR (RUSSIA)

(SBU) KEY POINTS

-- Russian Envoy Margelov told SE Gration May 27 that Russia was an "honest broker" on Sudan and sees the issue as a positive pilot area for U.S.-Russia collaboration.

-- He believed Sudan would continue efforts to divide the international community and underscored the importance of passing major messages to Bashir directly.

-- The Envoy lamented most Europeans' ignorance of ground truth in Sudan and described his plans to host a September 2009 academic meeting in Moscow to expose creative ideas on Sudan.

End Key Points.

Russia as an Honest Broker on Sudan

11. (SBU) During a May 27 meeting with SE Gration, Russian Parliamentarian and Envoy on Sudan Mikhail Margelov noted Russia decided to join P5 discussions on Sudan because the issues were causing a headache for Russia at the UN. He emphasized that Russia is not linked to Bashir or the South, does not have major investments in Sudan (unlike the Chinese with USD 14 billion tied up in the country), has no post-colonial feelings, and therefore there is nothing to prevent Russia from being an honest broker. Margelov noted he has other responsibilities so can't be totally focused on Sudan but Russia has an excellent Ambassador in Khartoum who has been instructed to support P-5 efforts and the other Envoys.

12. (SBU) SE Gration lauded Russia's role and noted there are a lot of potential areas for U.S.-Russia collaboration on Sudan. He invited Russia's efforts to join the U.S. in pressuring Sudanese Presidential Advisor Ghazi on the NGO/humanitarian situation in

Darfur. SE Gration invited Russia's participation in the June 23 forum on Darfur in Washington, casting the event as an opportunity to think more innovatively on monitoring and other issues.

Sudan as Positive Issue for U.S.-Russia Collaboration

13. (SBU) Margelov responded that the U.S. and Russia have overlapping interests on Sudan and no one wants "another Somalia." Russia sees the whole Sahel region as problematic, and Sudan is one large part of that. Margelov voiced his pleasure at having a pragmatic counterpart with SE Gration. In the new climate of a "reset" in bilateral relations, Margelov said the two countries need to deliver positive pilot projects that are not in each other's backyard (e.g., not Venezuela and not Ukraine). SE Gration agreed that Sudan is a wonderful area for cooperation as there is not a lot of baggage for the two countries.

14. (SBU) In response to Margelov's comment about an NGO in Alaska working on a study of south Sudan wealth-sharing, SE Gration noted many U.S. NGOs are forming such studies and these efforts will help support the peace process.

Sudanese Tactics to Divide International Pressure

15. (SBU) Margelov noted the Sudanese are always trying to separate the main countries involved in Sudan peace issues and will invent incentives to "pick them off" and prevent collective pressure. He noted, only half-jokingly, that he was glad Russia is in tough economic times so the oligarchs won't be investing in Sudan and therefore are not a complicating factor in Russia's relations with the country. In this regard, Margelov sees China as critically important due to its investments, people working in Sudan, and dependence on oil from the country. At the same time, he sees Chinese Envoy Liu Guijin as having made great progress on China's policy in the last few months.

Major Messages Need to go to Bashir Directly

16. (SBU) Margelov reported he had met with Bashir before the ICC indictment and expects to receive pressure to meet with Bashir again in the future. He believes Bashir is clearly pulling the strings in Khartoum and the decision-maker for the regime. Because of this, Margelov believes the Envoys will at least have to interact with Bashir indirectly. However, he also worries that the Envoys' words will be modified as they make their way to Bashir so if there are serious messages which require decision, it will be important to meet directly with him.

Inaccurate European Perceptions of Darfur

17. (SBU) Margelov lamented the lack of awareness and understanding of Sudan issues among European politicians. In particular, he derided a 2008 Council of Europe debate in Strasbourg on Sudan. He noted that out of several hundred parliamentarians, he was the only one to have physically visited Darfur. Terming the debate a "disaster," Margelov said it was based entirely on media distortions. By contrast, he was surprised by three things during a February 2007 visit, and these nuances are usually lost in debates on Darfur:

- There were no guns for sale in the markets, suggesting a certain kind of order.
- There is no open slavery.
- When he flew over Darfur, he saw neither burnt villages nor battlefield traces, leading him to believe the conflict is not a massive "World War Two style war."

September 2009 Academic Meeting in Russia on Sudan

18. (SBU) Margelov noted Russia would be hosting a late September meeting in Moscow to allow intellectuals to debate various creative ideas for peace-building in Darfur. In particular, he hopes the meeting will illuminate ideas which may not be politically correct for Envoys to say but can be helpful to get out in the open.

Background on Russian Envoy

¶9. (SBU) Margelov speaks fluent English and Arabic. He reported that PM Medvedev asked him to take the job of Sudan Envoy but he can only be partially devoted to the efforts due to his main job as an elected member of Russia's Parliament. He has one staff member devoted full-time to Sudan.

¶10. (U) Following is the text of an official bio provided by Margelov's staff:

In December 2000, Mikhail Margelov was elected to represent the Pskov Region in the Council of Federation (the Upper House of Russian Parliament), where he joined the Committee for Foreign Affairs. In November 2001, he was elected Chairman of this Committee.

From its creation in October 1999 until autumn 2000 Mikhail Margelov was a director of the Russia Information Center (Rosinformcentr). The Center was established as a governmental agency to cover events in the Northern Caucasus, as well as general coverage of the internal political events. From May 1998 to September 1999 he held a managerial position at RIA-Novosti Information Agency.

Mr. Margelov was born in 1964 in Moscow. He graduated from the Institute of Countries of Asia and Africa, affiliated with Moscow State University. He has worked as an interpreter in the International Department of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, taught Arabic at the Higher School of the USSR State Security Committee, and was Senior Editor of the Arab section in the TASS News Agency.

Mikhail Margelov is married and has a son Dmitiri.

End Text of Bio.

¶11. (U) SE Gration's delegation has cleared this cable.

LEBARON